

VZCZCXRO0620

RR RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHNP RUEHROV RUEHSR

DE RUEHB #0825 1671309

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

R 161309Z JUN 09

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9069

INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 000825

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/WE AND EUR/RPM

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/2019

TAGS: PREL MARR OSCE BE

SUBJECT: BELGIAN MFA VIEWS ON CORFU CONFERENCE AND EUROPEAN SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

REF: STATE 59226

Classified By: Political Economic Counselor Richard Eason, reason 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. On June 15, Poloff used reftel as an opportunity to discuss the Corfu ministerial meeting and the future of European security with Francois De Kerchove, acting Director for Security Policy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium. Foreign Minister De Gucht will attend the ministerial. De Kerchove began by saying that there is a definite need to respond and talk to the GOR about its proposals for European security. There is, however, also a need for more specificity as to what the Russians want. Most if not all of the principles of international law the Russians insist upon are already enshrined in the UN and OSCE founding documents, he said. The proper forum for the talks is the OSCE, he said, or at least a group corresponding to the full membership of the OSCE. De Kerchove said that while it is good to talk about ways to improve what the Russians call "soft security" -- drugs, crime and other transnational problems -- this term should not be used to replace the human dimension that is a pillar of the OSCE. He recognized that the GOR's general goal seems to be a decrease in the transatlantic emphasis in Europe to increase Russian influence on security policies. Belgium wants the discussion with the Russians to be well-structured and sees the need for coordination and debate not only in the OSCE but also in NATO and the EU. These discussions should influence the pace, content, objectives and forum of the security architecture discussions. Belgium agrees that the existing institutions are important to preserve, and also that it is important to stick to the red lines established at the Helsinki meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in December 2008.

¶2. De Kerchove shared a French government non-paper on the Russian proposals for security in Europe. (Post can provide this paper on request, if it is not already circulated to the Department by the French.) He said that the Belgians find most of the proposals in the non-paper unobjectionable. However, he questioned the continuing utility of the Charter of Paris, saying it contains a certain "logic of blocs" that is now outmoded. The Belgians also disagree with the French view that a new treaty is a viable outcome of the security discussions. De Kerchove said that the fundamental problem is a lack of confidence by the Russians that will not be overcome by signing a treaty. They have two sore points, he said: the shrinking of their area of influence as their former satellites join NATO and the E, and missile defense. It will be necessary to reach a "political modus vivendi" on those issues, he said.

¶3. De Kerchove said that Russia should show willingness to discuss resolving the frozen conflicts in Georgia and elsewhere, and also the impasse over the Conventional Forces in Europe, although these should no be made preconditions.

The link between CFE and the Security Architecture is the most sensitive question, De Kerchove said. Two years after the Russian suspension, CFE is all but dead, and it needs to be revitalized. He said that this may require putting aside the Istanbul commitments in order to get a CFE dialogue going. At the same time, he said it is necessary to support Georgia and its territorial integrity.

¶4. Comment: Based on this conversation, it appears that Belgium is generally in accord with U.S. views of the direction the talks on European Security should proceed. De Kerchove said the Belgians would like to avoid a philosophical debate in Corfu and focus on concrete topics. However, he seemed skeptical that the ministers at Corfu would be able to do so.

BUSH

.